



JOINT STRIKE FIGHTERS DELIVERED TO THE FLEET



The Marine Corps welcomed their first operational F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) jet fighters on Wednesday, Jan. 11, at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) in Florida. This is a milestone for the program and the beginning of the transition for the Marine Corps to the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). The joint strike fighter variants flew to Eglin from Lockheed Martin headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas. The JSFs were delivered to Eglin's 33rd Fighter Wing, Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 501

(VMFAT-501). "The STOVL capability of the F-35B will enable us to deploy with the Marine Air-Ground Task Force and ensure these fifth-generation capabilities are available when needed," said Lt. Col. James B. Wellons, commanding officer of VMFAT-501. "Our mission is to conduct F-35B operations in coordination with our joint and coalition partners at Eglin Air Force Base in order to attain our annual pilot training requirement."

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HEROES

FALLEN 1/5 MARINE TO BE AWARDED NAVY CROSS



The family of Lance Cpl. Donald J. Hogan will receive his Navy Cross, "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy," from Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, on Camp Pendleton on Jan. 17. Hogan, a rifleman with 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, was killed after an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated during a foot patrol through Helmand province, Afghanistan, in 2009. Hogan's squad was under fire from an enemy fighter when he noticed a string in the road leading to a nearby corn field was pulled taut, a common way to activate IEDs. He pushed a nearby Marine out of the way and alerted the rest of his squad. Those Marines were able to move away from the device before it detonated and mortally wounded Hogan. "Lance Corporal Hogan's extreme act of selflessness saved a Marine's life and allowed the rest of the squad to avoid the

full brunt of the fragmentation from the improvised explosive device," reads his Navy Cross citation. Hogan, who is from San Clemente, Calif., has also received the Combat Action Ribbon, and Purple Heart Medal. [Read More](#)

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TWO HAWAII MARINES HONORED FOR HEROIC, LIFE-SAVING ACTIONS



Gunnery Sgt. Lawrence Bostic and Capt. Robert A. Christian were presented with Navy and Marine Corps Medals during an award ceremony on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay on Jan. 6. The medals were presented for their actions when they saved a drowning Marine at Pyramid Rock Beach at Marine Corps Base Hawaii on May 21, 2009. Christian was at the beach with his family



when he heard someone calling for help. He swam out to rescue the man, who had been caught in a rip tide, but began to struggle himself while heading back to shore. Bostic, also at the beach with his family, noticed the two having trouble and also swam out to help. "It was an honor to be awarded," Christian said. "But as Marines, it's embedded in

us to watch each other's back and look out for each other. That's what they teach us since day one, and that's what happened during this incident." The Navy and Marine Corps medal is the highest decoration for non-combat heroism awarded to Marines and Sailors, typically when service members put themselves in harm's way in an attempt to save a life.

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MARINE SHOWS SURVIVORS THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN



Cpl. Corey Teague, an infantry skills instructor with the Training and Instructor Group (TIG) at Marine Corps Security Cooperating Group (MCSCG) in Virginia Beach, Va., traveled over 1,300 miles to support military children and their families who lost family members, most of whom he had never met. Teague, a mentor for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (T.A.P.S.), had something in common with these individuals: he had lost someone in the military that he cared about. His friend, Lance Cpl. Jordan Haerter, who died in Iraq in 2008, is his inspiration for

volunteering. T.A.P.S. is a non-profit organization that supports families of fallen military members after Sept. 11 and helps the Snowball Express, an annual event in Dallas, Tx. The event, held Dec. 9 - 13, 2011 provided four days of fun and healing for almost 1,700 families of fallen military members. Teague said the most important thing is that the surviving families take home the knowledge and consolation that they are remembered.

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NEWS

OPERATION TAGEER SHAMAL: AFGHANS, MARINES EXTEND PRESENCE WEST OF HELMAND RIVER



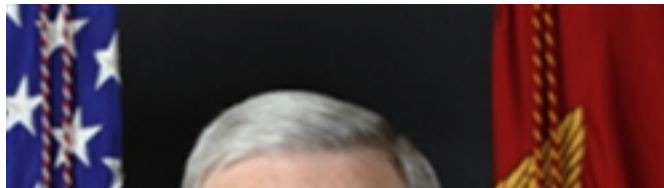
Operation Tageer Shamal (Shifting Winds) enabled Afghan National Security Forces and Marines with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment to work together to clear the central Helmand River Valley of insurgent activity from Jan. 4 to 8. The Marines are transitioning responsibility of security of the area and nearby Garmsir district to Afghan forces and the district government. The operation brought Afghan forces to the area, which is largely left alone by the country's government, to promote

legitimate governance. During the operation, Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers led the Marines in searches for illegal drugs, weapons and improvised explosive device (IED) making material. "We've learned a lot from the Marines -- searching, patrolling, and sweeping for IEDs," said ANA Sgt. Khal Mohammad, an infantryman with 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 215th Corps. "Now, I'm proud to lead them during this operation." The Afghan soldiers also conducted shuras, or consultations, with local leaders to discuss the local infrastructure and discover issues to bring to the attention of the Garmsir government.

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VIDEO NOT IN LINE WITH WARRIOR ETHOS



On Jan. 12, the Commandant of the Marine Corps released the following statement: "I have viewed an internet video that depicts Marines desecrating several dead Taliban in Afghanistan. I want to be clear and



unambiguous, the behavior depicted in the video is wholly inconsistent with the high standards of conduct and warrior ethos that we have demonstrated throughout our history.

Accordingly, late yesterday I requested that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service pull together a team of their very best agents and immediately assign them responsibility to thoroughly investigate every aspect of the filmed event. Additionally I am assigning a Marine General Officer and senior attorney, both with extensive combat experience, to head up an internal - Preliminary Inquiry into the matter. Once the investigation and Preliminary Inquiry are complete and the facts have been determined, then the

Marine Corps will take the appropriate next steps.

Rest assured that the institution of the Marine Corps will not rest until the allegations and the events surrounding them have been resolved. We remain fully committed to upholding the Geneva Convention, the Laws of War, and our own core values."

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HOME JUST AFTER HOLIDAYS



Marines of Marine Aerial Refueler Squadron 252 reunited with family and friends on Jan. 9 at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point. The nearly 50 Marines attached to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit were deployed for almost eight months with two of their KC-130J Hercules transport aircraft. They spent four and a half months at Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella in Sicily, Italy, supporting operations over Libya, and



three and a half months in Djibouti, supporting antiterrorism efforts. During the entire eight months, the detachment experienced zero incidents, zero injuries and a 100 percent mission success rate. Being deployed over the holidays means the Marines now have a lot of catching up to do with their families. "There's eight months of lost time," said Maj. Ed Fergus, the detachment's officer in charge. "We all wished we were here with our loved ones, but it's part of the business and what we signed up to do."

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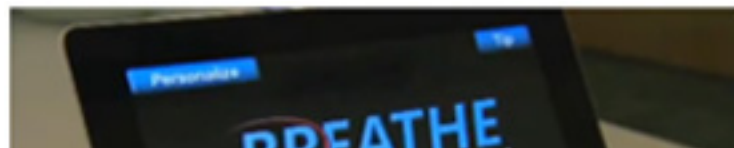
WOUNDED MARINE AIMS TO GO TO SUPER BOWL

Thanks to Hope for Warriors, Lance Cpl. Kyle Moser received an amazing present on his 20th birthday. The organization arranged for the Marine to Skype (use Internet video conferencing) from Walter Reed Hospital in Bethesda, Md., with former Bears quarterback Jim McMahon. McMahon invited the Marine to the Super Bowl on Feb. 5 in Indianapolis, Ind. Though Moser has surgeries in February, he intends to be in the stands for the Super Bowl kickoff, provided he "keeps up with his physical therapy and gets off all of his IVs," says his mother Patricia Zander. Moser lost both his legs and part of his right hand after an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated while he was on patrol in Afghanistan at the end of November, 2011. He has begun rehab and will soon be moving to the physical rehabilitation center to continue getting stronger. In the photo, Vice President Joe Biden visits with Moser on Christmas Day at Walter Reed Hospital.

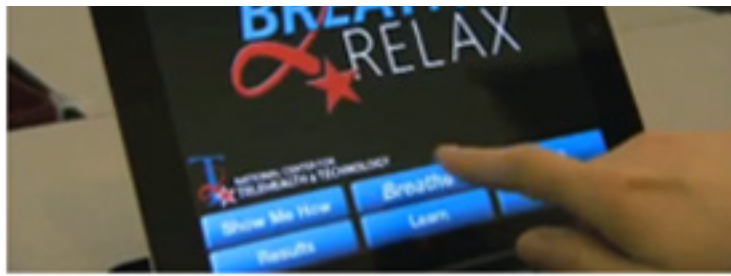


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DOD LAUNCHES CELL PHONE APPS TO HELP HEAL THE SCARS OF WAR



Service members and veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) need look no further than their cell phones these days for assistance



with managing stress. A variety of applications (apps) created by the Department of Defense (DoD) are currently available for download to help heal the scars of war. Such apps include "Breathe2Relax" and the "T2 Mood Tracker," which keeps track of a user's behavior patterns. Skip Moe,

Chief of Staff at the DoD says that today's warriors know technology and they're used to it. Garnering the familiarity of technology allows service members to help deal with stress and make a significant difference in their psychological health. The T2 Mood Tracker has been particularly successful, with 31,000 downloads since it was released in Sept. 2010 with 185,000 sessions logged by its users. Other apps to assist with stress management include the "PTSD Coach," "PE Coach" and the "Pocket Guide for Mild Traumatic Brain Injury."

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CIVILIANS GET A TASTE OF MARINE CORPS ETHICS



Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. hosted 13 executives from national security, telecommunications and international beverage industries as part of simulated ethics training at The Basic School (TBS) on Jan. 5. The civilians are from the master of business administration program and executive members of the Center for Ethics and Corporation Responsibility J. Mack Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University. Their participation at TBS was designed to show them how the

Marine Corps teaches ethics, using honor, courage and commitment as the foundation of decision-making. "Ethics is essential to mission accomplishment," said Dr. Steven D. Olson, the center director. "The Marine Corps has been showing that for years. Now it's time for the corporate world and business students to see and appreciate that." The civilians hiked through a marked trail in teams, accomplishing a variety of missions with ethical challenges. Afterward, they discussed their experiences with the group to determine what

they could have done differently or better. Olson said he wanted the participants to take away the idea that responsibility holds them to higher ethical standards.

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THANK YOU

COMMUNITY WELCOMES NEW JERSEY MARINE BACK FROM AFGHANISTAN

On Jan. 6, community members gathered at Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4715 in Point Pleasant Beach, N.J., to shake hands with Kevin Nickerson, a local Marine who recently returned home from Afghanistan. Post Commander Donald Tooker, who was in Vietnam in 1968, presented Nickerson with a year's membership to the Post. "A lot of us when we came back 40 years ago had nothing like this," said Tooker. "I want to give you this card that means more to us than anything in this world at this time." Nickerson's parents credit the friendship and support of the veterans at the Post for helping them overcome their worry over their son's deployment. Though the party was a homecoming, Nickerson will soon leave for his next tour of duty and is heading back to Camp Lejeune.



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HOME UNDER CONSTRUCTION FOR WOUNDED WARRIOR



The Homes for Our Troops, Inc. program is providing a brand-new house to Lance Cpl. Daniel Peterson, who lost both legs in a bomb attack while serving in Afghanistan in 2010. His



wheelchair made it difficult to maneuver around in his former house. The new house is more open and will feature lower cabinets and wider doorways, among other modifications, for ease of accessibility. For Peterson, the house is more than just a dwelling; he says it will make his life more normal. "I mean it's kind of almost surreal feeling that all this has been put together," he said. The \$250,000 house is being built by SpawGlass Construction Corporation with help from

volunteers. Originally from California, Peterson will now call Tomball, Texas, home when the house is completed in March.

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HABITAT BREAKS GROUND ON VETERANS' PROJECT

Patuxent Habitat for Habitat Humanity (PHH) will renovate and expand the Getscher family home in Chaptico, Md., to accommodate Marine Lance Cpl. Caleb Getscher. Getscher was wounded in Afghanistan in the summer of 2011 and is currently undergoing rehabilitation at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. The PHH conducted a groundbreaking ceremony at the residence on Jan. 6 and is the first project in the organization's Gary Senese Memorial Veteran Repair Corps Program.

Senese, who died in August 2011, was a Marine veteran and PHH volunteer. According to PHH Executive Director Pamela Shubert, the project will encompass construction of an accessible room for Getscher and a garage for his vehicle and will take up to 16 weeks. A couple hundred volunteers are expected to participate in the remodeling. "I'm happy to see they have a part in this," Getscher said. "It's astonishing to see how much they care." The Getscher Project is the first in what Shubert hopes will be 10 projects to help the Patuxent area's military veterans.

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Events

SINISE WANTS BENEFIT TO HELP INJURED MARINE



Actor Gary Sinise wants to help build a new home for Marine Lance Cpl. Jaun Dominguez in Temecula, Calif. Dominguez lost his legs and right arm in 2010 while serving in Afghanistan. Sinise is known for playing Lt. Dan, the soldier who loses both legs in the movie "Forrest Gump." He and his band, the Lt. Dan Band, named after the character, would play at a benefit concert to raise money for the building project. The concert date is pending.

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MIRAMAR SCREENS SPECIAL EPISODE OF iCARLY

Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar hosted a special episode screening with the cast of "iCarly," a Nickelodeon teen sitcom on Jan. 9. The episode, "iMeet the First Lady," was shot with the First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama as part of her "Joining Forces" initiative. The initiative aims to educate and spark action from all sectors of society to ensure that military families have the support they have earned. Additional screenings will be conducted at Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn., on Jan. 11; at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in Fort Dix, N.J., on Jan. 12; and at Hayfield Secondary School in Alexandria, Va. on Jan. 13. "iMeet the First Lady" will air on Nickelodeon on Jan. 16 at 7:30 p.m. (ET/PT).



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